It is understood that the Iranian internal procedures required to be completed for he approval of the SPA have not yet been finalized. The matter is being pursued with the Iranian authorities.

Parallel sale of kerosene

814. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to amend SKO Control order of 93 by allowing parallel sale of kerosene;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government would be able to check the prices of kerosene if the kerosene is imported privately; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b)This Ministry had introduced Parallel Marketing System (PMS) for kerosene *vide* Notification dated 2.9.1993 allowing the private agencies to import and market kerosene at market prices in the country. Subsequently, on the recommendation of this Ministry, Deptt. of Commerce *vide* Notification dated 25.11.2003 canalized the import of kerosene through State Trading Enterprises such as Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and IBP Company Limited (IBP) for all purposes and also through the State Trading Corporation by Advance License Holders. SKO Control Order, 1993 has now been amended on 06.07.2006 allowing parallel marketers to source their requirements from indigenous sources also.

(c) and (d) The price of kerosene supplied through the PDS is currently Rs. 9.05/litre in Delhi and has not been increased since April 2002. Parallel marketers are free to sell the kerosene at market determined prices.

LPG coverage in Rajasthan

815. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what per cent of population has been covered by domestic LPG in Rajasthan;

(b) what efforts the public sector oil marketing companies are making to increase the percentage of population covered;

(c) what is the impact of Government's advice to public secto- oil marketing companies to concentrate their expansion plan in semi-uroan and rural areas;

(d) whether it is a fact that a large number of persons are in the waiting list for LPG connections in Rajasthan;

(e) if so, the number of persons on the waiting list for LPG connections as on date and since how long; and

(f) by when the list is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) As on 1.7.2006, Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) were operating 440 LPG distributorships in the State of Rajasthan. Through these distributorships, OMCs are serving about 36.89 lakh LPG customers covering 39.82% population in Rajasthan.

(b) and (c) OMCs supply domestic LPG through their distribution network and have the freedom to set up LPG distributorships at viable locations as per their commercial considerations. The setting up of LPG distributorships is a continuous process and involves identifying a suitable location, arranging land for setting up of godown and other statutory clearances. In view of this, it is not possible to indicate any specific time frame for setting up of new LPG distributorships. Government has advised OMCs to concentrate their future expansion plans in semi-urban and rural areas in the country.

As on 1.7.2006. OMCs had set up 1105 and 1190 distributorships in rural and urban-rural areas respectively in the country. OMCs have taken steps such as introducing 5 kg cylinders and setting up community kitchens to enhance the use of LPG in uncovered areas. OMCs have also finalized a common industry marketing plan covering 791 locations for setting up LPG distributorships mainly in rural and urban-rural (semi-urban) locations.

(d)to (f) As on 1.7.2006, there was no waiting list for LPG connections in Rajasthan.

Introduction of Smart Cards

816. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finally decided to introduce Smart Cards for kitchen fuels in the country;